Thanks to a number of initiatives such as The Avenue Concept, AS220, CityArts, the Providence International Arts Festival etc. our city has seen a spectacular growth in public art in recent years. This tour presents a number of large scale murals by artists from around the world, who have turned streets and parking lots into outdoor art galleries. Yarrow Thorne, founder and director of The Avenue Concept graduated from RISD and won a Robert Rauschenberg seed grant to start his public art organization (a privately funded 501c3). For large scale murals he works with Providence native (and Classical High graduate) Nick Platzer and his Vienna based Inoperable Gallery as a main curator. The Avenue Concept has also sponsored an extensive public sculpture program in Providence.

Websites: http://theavenueconcept.com/, http://www.inoperable.at/about/

Friendship Street

Johan Bjurman can be credited with making the earliest large scale murals in Providence. Several of his well-known works have vanished due to development, but his best known trompe l’oeil painting on the Hanley Building of 1987 has just been beautifully restored by Providence Painted Signs (the firm behind the mural above Trinity Brew Pub). Bjurman has been an artist in Providence for over 35 years. Classically trained, he early on began executing large murals. One of his first large scale murals was installed on the side of Narragansatt Electric Power Station in 1977. He established Bjurman Studio 30 years ago specializing in murals, trompe l’oeil, decorative art projects, billboards and hand painted signs. Johan has participated in a number of major restoration projects, such as the Stadium Theater in Woonsocket, RI, the Culinary Institute of America in Poughkeepsie, NY, Executive Office Building and the Capitol building in Washington, D.C., façade of the Fleur de Lis Building of the Providence Art Club, Most Holy Trinity Church in Pomfret, CT, and the State Houses of Rhode Island, Minnesota, Iowa, Virginia and Pennsylvania. Johan is particularly fond of designing and painting 7 trompe l’oeil lunettes of Mozart’s operas which are installed at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia. Johan currently focuses primarily on his plein air landscape painting. Some of his pieces are in the collection of the Providence Public Library, the Greenville, RI Public Library, Amica Insurance Company and the Omni Hotel in Providence, RI.

Website: http://bjurmanstudio.com/

Other works by Johan Bjurman in Providence:


Friendship Street

Born during his parents’ flight from Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge terror regime, Andrew Hem grew up under the influence of different cultures, such as the rural society of his Khmer ancestors, and the tough Los Angeles neighborhood where his family eventually settled. There he discovered a vibrant urban arts scene. He got a B.F.A. in illustration from the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles (2006). Working in gouache, oil and acrylic, he weaves atmospheric, richly textured narratives in a vivid palette of twilight blues enlivened by swaths of deep red and splashes of golden light. His haunting impressions of culture and landscape evoke the life of the spirit through the visionary manifestation of memories and dreams. Andrew Hem has executed large scale murals, and exhibited in galleries worldwide. His work has been widely published in trade magazines and illustrated articles in The Atlantic, New Scientist, the Los Angeles Times. He has produced stage sets for the Fort Worth Opera. He lives and works in Los Angeles. Andrew Hem was Artist in Residence for the Avenue Concept’s “Influx” program and 2017 PVD Fest. (text adopted from his website)

Website: http://www.andrewhem.com/ Video about Misty Blue: https://vimeo.com/223331767
3. Agustín Patiño: Dialysis of the Planet (2010)
9 Plenty Street

Agustín Patiño was born in Cuenca, Ecuador. He first studied Architecture at Cuenca State University and then got a BFA in Painting and Printmaking from Central University of Quito. His first solo exhibit was in his hometown at the age of fifteen, the beginning of an artistic career that has taken him all over the world. His paintings are in private and corporate collections in Europe, the United States and Latin America. Among his awards are the World Bank Exhibit on Latin America, The Bradford F. Swan Award, Providence Art Club Open Painting 2010 Exhibition, The Viva El Arte 2007 at the Arts Worcester Event, The Luis Martinez Award in Ecuador, “Public Choice Award” in the 1994 Biennale in Cuenca, Ecuador. He has been an instructor at the Providence Art Club. This 135-foot-long mural was commissioned by the Dialysis Center of Providence. Patino took the occasion to turn Dialysis into a metaphor of global environmental concerns.

863 Broad Street

The enormous mural shows Providence as a dream landscape located between Boston and New York, influenced by the work of Spanish surrealist painter Salvadore Dali. It includes many images of buildings and people in Providence. The building on the right is the CityArts For Youth building at 891 Broad Street. Maximo Abreu and Elis Valdez, employees at the Food Market are depicted on the right side of the Mural. Dr. Joseph Chazan, the East Providence Nephrologist and supporter of public art, is depicted in both murals by Agustín Patiño. The mural visible on the side of the food market on the right is the first version of Munir Mohammed’s “Southside Circle of Hope, Opportunity and Renewal of 1992.”

Website: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_Y-LH9JaNs

Lexington Street/Broad Street

This mural replaced Munir Mohammed’s 1992 150x12’ long mural on the southside of “America’s Food Basket/Compare Foods,” the largest supermarket on Broad Street. “Southside Circle of Hope, Opportunity and Renewal” brought together City Arts for Youth, local mural artists and children and families from the neighborhood in a community painting and clay sculpture project supported by a RI Foundation Centennial grant. A family portrait is surrounded by a map of the area, filled with small clay sculptures and reliefs. Munir Deishinni Mohammed was born in Kumasi, Ghana, West Africa. He holds a Masters in Arts Education from RISD and a Bachelor of Arts from Ghanatta College of Art. He executed the largest of Gretchen Dow Simpson’s murals along I-95 in Pawtucket. Providence CityArts for Youth was founded in 1992. Today it provides free professional arts education to city youth. It was one of 12 programs to receive the 2014 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award from first Lady Michelle Obama at the White House.
142 Colfax Street

A mural on the side of Brother’s Famous Pizza advocates against gun violence. Note the gunmen in the devil’s eyes. Its text reads in part: “Bullets spray from walls like tears pour from eyes that have seen too much... We are ghetto prisoners trying to escape from a world that is self-destructing through violence and hate. Tired of seeing our blood stain the concrete, so the message we paint. Backs against the wall, we must stand up before it’s too late. We have been taught to kill each other, learned a wicked mind state. But we can change. You can change.”
The mural was sponsored by Casey Family Services, Adler’s Hardware, Truskool Studio. Angel Garcia lives in New York City.
Website: https://www.instagram.com/angelgarciaart/?hl=en

142 Colfax Street

The artist “SwerveOne,” and his friends are here depicted as group of four Graffiti painters (Identified by their tags) during a prickly encounter in an imaginary Providence subway station. According to Yarrow Thorne, this type of narrative mural with Hip Hop characters is typical for the 1980s and 1990s, evolved with breakdancing (‘b-boying’) and is nowadays exceedingly rare.
Booth Street

Nychos was born in 1982 in the small town of Bruck an der Mur, in Austria. He spent his childhood in the Austrian countryside with his father and grandfather, who were hunters. He remembers being traumatized by the dismembering of animals, which continued to influence his art. In 2005, he founded the “Rabbit Eye Movement”, a street art and communication agency. Since 2012, Nychos has become well known globally, thanks to the many walls he painted the United States, France, England and Canada.

Websites: https://rabbiteyemovement.at/, https://soldart.com/a/nychos/

“During the 5 days painting this in a low income housing project, headlines everywhere talked about division, violence, and racism, however we experienced the exact opposite. The community around us was welcoming, excited, positive, and enamored with the murals. What started as a project to raise awareness for endangered species became more about the unification of people through art and the sustainability of mankind.” Nicholas Platzer

A Street, Providence

Lauren YS is a Bay Area artist. Lauren (Lolo) Ys went for one year to Brown University, before she transferred to Stanford. Since graduating, Lauren has dedicated herself to creating large-scale works of public art that aim to bring a sense of vibrancy and wonder to every community she approaches. Lauren's work aims to create and populate a misfit wonderland in which imaginary heroines can address the absurdities of reality in the confines of a page or a wall. Influenced by dreams, mythology, death, comics, love, sex, psychedelia, animation, nostalgia, and her Asian-American heritage, Lauren's work is often geared towards pushing a narrative undertone and always has a fantastical aesthetic. Lauren has completed a residency and solo show at Nychos’ Rabbit Eye Movement studio in Vienna, and has since shown work and live-painted at various international art festivals and institutions. Outdoor and indoor mural locations include the World Trade Center in New York. She has shown work in galleries and painted large scale murals all over the world.

Website: http://laurenys.com/

10. Swerve One, a.o.: “Graffiti Dragon” (2010ff)
Rice Street

This was the first of three murals in this area. Commissioned by the Avenue Concept from Swerve One and other artists, it evolved over time. The dragon is a reference to the Chinese Supermarket on whose back wall it is located.

Mik Shida (b. 1990) is an Australian artist, specializing in large-scale murals, painting, sculpture, video work and installation. Shida has been involved in street art in Melbourne since 2004. Since then he has worked in 35 cities and 20 countries. The great majority of his work is created pro bono for the neighborhoods he visits on his travels and across Australia. His work reflects his multicultural upbringing. It is naturally Australian while at the same time being influenced by a plethora of different cultures arts as well as his own polish cultural heritage.

Website: [http://www.mikshida.com/](http://www.mikshida.com/)

Dak.1NE “Anchored” (2016)
Courtyard of Classical High School

Born and raised in Waipahu, Hawaii, DAK.1NE (Jesse Velazquez) has been working as a street artist for the past five years. Originally inspired by American graffiti, DAK.1NE started working with a local Hawaiian arts organization called 808 Urban, which promotes community-based art. He is famous for his paintings of whales, which he believes are “very mystical creatures.” In traditional Hawaiian lore, whales are thought to be the animal spirits of the ancestors and the keepers of knowledge. In his mural “Anchored,” DAK.1NE combines the humpback whales of his native Hawaii with the sperm whales, a vital part of Rhode Island’s history. There is a mother and a calf representing each species. The left side of the mural represents New England, the right side features a Hawaiian-inspired landscape and the whales are symbolically intermingling in each other’s habitat.


Dan is an interdisciplinary artist and art educator who combines new media such as 3D printing and digital animation with foundational skills of painting and drawing. He graduated from Classical High School in 1997. His abstract mural took inspiration from ship camouflage used extensively in WWI and transforms a previously plain corner into an exploration of how color, form, and light interact with the architecture. Whether viewing the mural from different angles or observing how sunlight moves across it, new lines and shapes are revealed, creating an ever-changing, dynamic experience.

Shepard Fairey is an American contemporary artist, graphic designer, and illustrator. A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design in 1992, he first became known for his “André the Giant Has a Posse” and “Obey Giant” sticker campaigns in Providence. He became widely known in the 2008 U.S. presidential election for his Barack Obama “HOPE” poster. His work is included in the collections at The Smithsonian, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. He was prominently featured in the Banksy film, ‘Exit at the Gift Shop.’ He lives in Los Angeles. Commissioned by AS220, the mural depicts several of Providence’s landmarks from the late 19th and early 20th Century, a period also referenced in the visual language of the mural. On the right you see the Biltmore Hotel (1922), in the center the Industrial Trust Building (1928) and on the left the railroad bridge over the Seekonk River (1908), which has been abandoned since 1976 and one of the two domed towers of the Atlantic Mill Building in Olneyville (1871/1882). Website: https://obeygiant.com/


Adjacent to Fairey’s piece is a mural designed by Aaron Peterman and commissioned by AS220. This work contains an excerpt from the poem “Ode to Censorship” by Guillermo Gómez-Peña (1955), set against a dark backdrop. Born in 1955 and raised in Mexico City, Gómez-Peña came to the US in 1978. His work, which includes performance art, video, audio, installations, poetry, journalism, and cultural theory, explores cross-cultural issues, immigration, the politics of language, “extreme culture” and new technologies in the era of globalization. A MacArthur fellow, he is a regular contributor to the national radio news magazine All Things Considered (National Public Radio), a writer for newspapers and magazines in the U.S. and Mexico, and a contributing editor to The Drama Review (MIT). Gómez-Peña’s “work centers around the border — borders meaning ethnicity, geographical, gender, everything ... like the borders of human (and) post-human.”


Amy Bartlett Wright has been a professional artist, illustrator and muralist for 30 years. She has executed murals in several Zoos around the country. After studying illustration at the University of Maryland and the Rhode Island School of Design she stayed in Providence. Bartlett Wright teaches at RISD’s Continuing Education Program. Coastway Community Bank, a 90 year old Rhode Island banking institution with more than $375 million in assets and 26,000 Members, commissioned the mural in 2011 for its downtown location. The execution had to wait until the building was ready in 2013. Website: http://www.amybartlettwright.com/
15. BEZT (Etam Cru) “She Never Came,” (2015) between Clemence and Mathewson Streets

Mateusz Gapski (“BEZT”) was born in 1987 in Turek, Poland, where he still lives. He finished the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź, where he met Sanier and the two started painting together under the name Etam Cru. Besides this collaboration, Bezt became a successful commercial artist and freelance designer. Bezt has created many large scale murals often on facades of dim and gray buildings from the socialist era. He works either with his partner Sanier or his fiancée Natalia Rak. The mural in Providence depicts a man waiting to propose to his girlfriend — who never showed up to dinner. The person depicted is Providence native Nick Platzer, curator at the Avenue Concept and founder of the Inoperable Gallery in Vienna.

Website: [http://www.etamcru.com/](http://www.etamcru.com/)


Natalia Rak (*1986) is a Polish muralist and fiancée of BEZT. A graduate of the Fine Arts Academy in Lodz with a diploma in Spatial and Poster design. She has executed large scale mural commissions all over the world.


Mary Beth Meehan: “Seen unseen”

New England photographer Mary Bethe Meehan installed her series of eight large portrait photographs in conjunction with the Providence International Arts Festival in June 2015. It was funded in part by an NEA “Our Town” grant as well as the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, and PopUp Providence. Mary Beth Meehan is a former staff photographer for the Providence Journal and was twice nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. Seen/Unseen depicts citizens of Providence.